

DEFENSIVE ERRORS COST THE POINTS

by ARGUS

Maidstone United 2 Wycombe Wanderers 0

MUD packs for fresh complexions? Maidstone and Wycombe Wanderers players must be the best looking players in the Isthmian League after their drenching in Kentish sub soil on Saturday. Looking like Kentucky minstrels they could hardly be distinguished from each other under the second half floodlights.

This was a brave battle with two evenly-matched sides disputing the points to the very end. Wycombe had more of the play but Maidstone won because they had a faster and more direct attack and because an otherwise perfectly sound Wanderers defence made two terrible howlers which both produced goals.

Goal number one—three minutes from half time—should never have been. Dennis Atkins pushed the ball back to goalkeeper Alan Jones when he ought to have cleared. Jones threw the ball out to John Beck, when he could have cleared and Ivor Ashby was robbed trying to clear.

Maidstone's persistent centre-forward Hobbs quickly smashed a shot against the crossbar and Colin Warnett promptly scored.

FATAL BACK PASS

Goal number two, in the 57th minute followed another fatal back pass—this time by Barry Darvill. With the ball failing to carry cleanly to Jones, Darvill jostled Hobbs, and a free kick was awarded just outside the Wycombe penalty area. Seconds later a mighty drive from right-half Derek Morgan made the score 2-0.

Ironically, these mistakes apart, the rejigged Wycombe defence looked much more impressive than against Leytonstone. Both the reserve recruits, Ashby and Darvill, settled down quickly against the faster opposition.

The industrious, telescopic legs of Ashby plagued the Maidstone left-wing pair, particularly in the first half.

The Wycombe forwards again disappointed. They had more of the ball than did the United attack but looked nothing like as dangerous near goal. Too many moves ebbed away in the quagmire of the middle of the field. The right wing of Len Worley and Michael Rockell seemed Wycombe's best weapon but was used too sparingly.

Beck, playing with much more confidence in his rightful full-back position moved upfield characteristically for one great drive—the best of the match—which veteran Danny Wiltshire just managed to tip round a post.

A goal down at the break, Wycombe pressed steadily during their first taste of Isthmian floodlight soccer. Maidstone were in real trouble as Steve Hyde thumped the ball against the crossbar from Worley's centre. When an equaliser seemed almost inevitable Morgan gave United a second breather and Wycombe's hopes receded only to be rekindled dramatically as Sheldon Bressington's shot beat Wiltshire, only to stick firmly in the goal-mouth mud.

SPEED BEATS WYCOMBE

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M AIDSTONE, who have been playing with more zip since the introduction of Hobbs as centre forward, fully deserved the Isthmian League points.

The best shot in the first half failed to score. This was a terrific drive by Wycombe right-back Beck, who dribbled half the length of the field before shooting. Wiltshire made a brilliant save.

Two minutes before the interval, Maidstone's persistent pressure was rewarded when Hobbs hit the crossbar and Warnett, following up, netted the rebound.

The second half, under floodlights, was full of excitement. Early on a well-placed free kick by Saunders was saved by Jones and then Dowler missed by inches.

Morgan, Maidstone right half who revelled in the mud and was strong in both attack and defence, broke up a dangerous raid by Hyde and Bressington. A minute later Hyde hit the crossbar and the ball was scrambled away.

It was a foul on Myers which led to Morgan scoring Maidstone's second goal from a free kick.

Both defences were sound with little to choose between them and it was the more speedy and excellent work of the Maidstone forwards which tipped the balance in favour of the home team.